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Promoting Women's Wellness

December 1993 Issue #1

Newsletter for the McMaster Research Centre for the Promotion of Women's Health

URBAN M.

The McMaster Research Centre for the Promotion of Women's Health is one of six centres that have been set up across Canada, part of a five year, three million dollar, national program funded by Health and Welfare Canada and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada to develop research on health promotion.

The six centres have been asked to explore the range of individual and social issues affecting people's health and develop new and effective approaches to promote healthy living- and working- conditions. The research agenda of each of the health-promotion centres will be determined by people working at the community "grassroots" level in tandem with researchers and other specialists in the health field.

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

World Health Organization

Our particular centre, from 1993 - 1998, is the only one which will focus specifically on women's health, using the World Health Organization's social definition. We will do so by exploring the relation of work, both paid and unpaid, in the home and outside, on women's health. Our research field will be Hamilton and area, and our methodology will be primarily based on what is called action-based participatory research.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

DEC

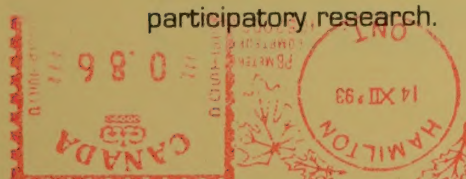
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- * to establish a basis for new, community-generated approaches to the promotion of women's health
- * to facilitate strong ties between academic researchers and community groups
- * to facilitate action-based and participatory research as a means for women to: a) explore their individual and collective health and wellness concerns and b) to engage in health promotion strategies to address the issues they define
- * to train graduate students in interdisciplinary research on women's health
- * to act as a resource centre for researchers in the field of women's health promotion

MAIN AREAS OF RESEARCH

- * the impact of work, paid and unpaid, inside the home and outside the home, on women's health
- * the health conditions related to women's work and the sources/causes of these conditions
- * the effectiveness of individual coping strategies and collective social change and health promotion strategies in improving women's health related to work
- * the effectiveness of action-based and participatory research as a community health-promotion strategy

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Hamilton, ON, L8R 3R1**



WHO WE ARE



Margaret Denton; Maroussia Hadjukowski Ahmed;
Mary O'Connor; Isik Zeytinoglu (left to right)

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

Margaret Denton is Assistant Professor in Sociology and Gerontology. She was the principal investigator in a social policy consulting firm before joining McMaster in 1989. In this capacity, she conducted numerous needs assessments and evaluations for all levels of government, as well as non-profit organizations. Her areas of expertise include women and the workplace, issues related to aging, and the delivery of community-based health and social services. She has extensive experience in the formulation of questionnaires, data analysis and interpretation.

Maroussia Hadjukowski Ahmed is Associate Professor in Women's Studies and French. She has expertise in interdisciplinary cultural analysis, feminist theory and issues related to immigrant women. She has co-authored reports about part-time faculty as well as the integration of female faculty at McMaster University.

Mary O'Connor is Associate Professor of Women's Studies and English. She is Co-Chair of the McMaster Research Centre for the Promotion of Women's Health and has expertise in interdisciplinary cultural analysis, in feminist theory, and in community relations. She was Acting Director of Women's Studies at McMaster in 1991-92 and authored a report on sexual harassment.

Isik Urla Zeytinoglu is Associate Professor of Industrial Relations at MDG School of Business in the Area of Human Resources/Labour Relations and an Advisor in Women's Studies. She is Co-Chair of the McMaster Research Centre for the Promotion of Women's Health. Her research interests include: women and work, new forms of work (including part-time), telework and job-sharing and issues on women and employment/industrial relations in Turkey, her country of origin. She has experience in survey methodology and quantitative data analysis as well as legislative content analysis.

STAFF

Karen Williams is the co-ordinator of the Research Centre. She has extensive experience in facilitating participatory action research projects and has provided educational and consulting support to community groups attempting to use this methodology. Her graduate education and teaching experience are in the areas of women's studies and community research strategies.

Laura Diskin is the secretary for the Research Centre. She has a diploma in Communication Arts and is involved in the McMaster Eco-Research Program.

Karen Barber is a research assistant for the Centre and is interested in health care directives. She is also a doctoral student in the Department of Sociology.

RESEARCH AFFILIATES

School of Social Work

& Dept. of Gerontology

Dr. Jane Aronson, Social Work

Dr. Patricia Daenzer, Social Work

Dr. Nora Gold, Social Work

Dr. Michael MacLean, Social Work/Gerontology

Dr. Susan Watt, Social Work

School of Nursing &

Master of Health Sciences Programme

Dr. Donna Ciliska, Nursing

Prof. Joan Crook, Nursing

Dr. Susan French, Nursing

Prof. Alba Mitchell, Nursing/C.E.&B./Public Health

Prof. Ruth Pallister, Nursing

Prof. Robin Weir, Nursing

Prof. Muriel Westmorland, Co-ord., MHScProg/Nursing

Labour Studies, Sociology & Geography

Dr. Vera Chouinard, Geography

Dr. Rhonda Lenton, Sociology

Dr. Wayne Lewchuk, Labour Studies/Economics

Dr. Julia S. O'Connor, Sociology

Dr. Vivienne Walters, Labour Studies/Sociology

Dr. Charlotte Yates, Labour Studies/Political Science

Dept. of Psychiatry,

East Region Mental Health Services,

School of Occupational Therapy

and Physiotherapy

Dr. M.A. Craven, Psychiatry/East Region Mental Health

Dr. Nick Kates, Psychiatry/East Region Mental Health

Dr. Allison L. McKinnon, School of OT/PT

Faculty of Health Sciences

Dept. of Family Medicine

Clinical Epidemiology & Biostatistics

Mathematics & Statistics

Dr. May Cohen, Assoc. Dean, Health Services

Dr. Fionella Crombie, Family Medicine/Physician

Dr. Andy Oxman, Family Medicine/C.E.&B.

Dr. Harry Shannon, Mathematics & Statistics

Dr. Christel A. Woodward, C.E.&B.

OUR FIRST WORKSHOP

Theory and Methods of Participatory Research

Monday, January 25

1:30 - 3:00

Kenneth Taylor Hall, Room 705

OFFICIAL OPENING

After a few months of setting up the Centre with the help of our Research Co-ordinator, Karen Williams, we were pleased to hold an Official Opening in order to thank our benefactors, affiliates and supporters, as well as friends from the university and the community.

Mary O'Connor, Co-Chair of the Centre welcomed everyone on behalf of principal investigators, highlighting the main aspects of the Centre and expressing our gratitude to all concerned. As well, she invited everyone to visit our offices in Kenneth Taylor Hall.

University President G. Kenney-Wallace cancelled previous engagements to express her strong support and to wish us well. Joan Coldwell, Director of the Women's Studies Programme, forcefully articulated the importance of our Centre for feminist scholarship and for the Hamilton community at large.

Dean Johnson (Social Sciences); Dean Truscott (Business); Dean Simpson (Humanities) and Associate Dean Medcof (Business) not only attended the Opening, but also expressed their confidence in our work. continued on next page

Last but not least, we were most pleased to see among us a number of our affiliates and our first research assistant, Karen Barber, as well as representatives of the community organizations who have already expressed interest in conducting collaborative research with us: Hamilton-Wentworth Home Care Program and Women and Wellness Project, to name only a couple.

We thank all who attended for their support. Energized by such encouragement and trust, we are looking forward to bringing our contribution to the knowledge and improvement of women's wellness in our region.

Maroussia Hadjukowski Ahmed

*Health Promotion is the
process of enabling
people to increase control
over, and to improve,
their health.*

Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion

OUR THANKS

We would like to thank McMaster University for its support in our application and in the set-up of the Centre: specifically the Arts Research Board for its crucial \$15,000 grant which has allowed us to set up our offices; Emmi Morwald of the Research Services for her help with our original application; Deans Johnson and Associate Dean Medcof for their allotment of space for our offices, which are in KTH 233 and 226a; Dr. McPherson and ECAH for their generous support of a graduate research student this year; and Joan Coldwell and the Women's Studies Office for their continued support.

INVITATION TO THE COMMUNITIES OF HAMILTON

The McMaster Research Centre for the Promotion of Women's Health received funding from the government to promote community-based health promotion research and intervention strategies and to act as a resource centre for researchers in the field of women's health promotion.

Community-based health promotion research and strategies cannot be accomplished without the contribution of community members. In order to find out what women's health needs are and what changes women need in their working conditions, we have to consult diverse groups of women who work in and out of their homes.

Our Centre would like to support and encourage new initiatives to promote women's health. Is your group developing a project or initiative or would you like to develop one? Would you like to have this process documented, and would you like our Centre to be involved working with you?

Like all other projects, we have limits on our time and resources, but we are committed to working with a variety of community-based groups on issues related to work and health. We are committed to a definition of community, work, and health which encompasses the diversity of women's communities and various forms of work and its relationship to their physical, emotional, and social health.

If you would like to be involved with the Centre, please check the appropriate items in the adjacent form, and send it to us at the provided address or phone us at 525-9140 ext. 23316/23554. We look forward to hearing from you and hope to meet you at a public meeting in the near future.

DO YOU WANT.....

TO RECEIVE THE CENTRE NEWSLETTER,
"PROMOTING WOMEN'S WELLNESS"? ☐



TO RECEIVE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT
BECOMING A COMMUNITY AFFILIATE? ☐

TO DISCUSS YOUR RESEARCH WITH CENTRE
RESEARCHERS TO SEE WHAT RESOURCES OR SUPPORT
THE CENTRE MIGHT HAVE TO OFFER? ☐

TO PUBLICIZE YOUR COMMUNITY RESEARCH ON WOMEN,
WORK AND HEALTH IN "PROMOTING WOMEN'S
WELLNESS"? ☐

TO RECEIVE INFORMATION ABOUT CENTRE
WORKSHOPS? ☐

TO MEET WITH A CENTRE REPRESENTATIVE TO EXPLORE
A POTENTIAL RESEARCH PROJECT WHICH WOULD
SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY AND WHICH RELATES TO
WOMEN, WORK AND HEALTH? ☐

TO PUBLISH YOUR RESEARCH IN THE WORKING PAPER
SERIES OF THE CENTRE? ☐

If you are interested in being involved in any way,
please include your name and address in the space
provided:

Name

Street Address

City

Postal Code

Phone Number, Fax, and/or E-Mail address

Clip out this form and send to the following address:

McMaster Research Centre
for the Promotion of Women's Health
McMaster University
1280 Main St. W.
Hamilton, Ontario, L8S 4M4
Fax: (905) 524-2522
E-Mail: mrcpowh@mcmail.cis.mcmaster.ca

ONGOING RESEARCH PROJECTS

Development of women's health research bibliography and review

We have begun a review and collation of women's health research done in Hamilton, both academic and community-based, with the help of graduate student assistant, Karen Barber. For this ongoing activity, we invite you to inform us of research that you are aware of.

Supportive housing for seniors

Margaret Denton is working with the VON Supportive Housing Advisory Committee to develop a model to support senior tenants in public housing to remain in their homes as they age. Members of the Advisory Committee of this project include tenants of the Hamilton-Wentworth Housing Authority, and representatives from the VON, Home Care, Visiting Homemakers, Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth, District Health Council, Department of Public Health, Long Term Care Division, Hamilton-Wentworth Housing Authority, and the Programme of Gerontology at McMaster.

Healthy working environments for women with disabilities

Margaret Denton, Allison McKinnon and Isik Zeytinoglu have started a project on the topic of healthy working environments for women with disabilities. They are in the process of developing community contacts and a research grant proposal.

Hamilton-Wentworth Home Care Program

We have also been meeting with the Hamilton-Wentworth Home-Care Program and other community-based service organizations to discuss possible research projects on women, work, and health. Our preliminary discussions suggest that there are important issues at management level; on work-place issues for homecare workers whose workplace is in the home of others; and on the conditions of many of their female clients be it those with MS caring for their families, or others.

Networking with potential project leaders and consultants

The principal investigators have been meeting with those affiliates who have offered to be project leaders as well as with some affiliates who have offered to be consultants. We would like to continue that process, meeting individually with all of you in order to understand more clearly how we can collaborate on specific projects.

Regulation of lesbian experience

Some of Jane Aronson's (research affiliate) ongoing work is centred around challenging the regulation of lesbian experience in the policies and practises of health, social welfare, legal and educational institutions. In addition, she is involved with Dr. Neysmith on a project entitled, "Homemakers define their work: The crux of community care for old people" which is funded by a SSHRC grant.

Women's Wellness Project

The Women's Wellness Project is a participatory action community-based project interested in learning more about the health and wellness needs of women in Hamilton-Wentworth. This study is guided by an Advisory Committee and is administered by the Hamilton-Wentworth District Health Council. It is funded by the Ministry of Health. The Advisory Committee is made up of consumers and service providers many of whom have been meeting since 1990 to define women's health issues in Hamilton-Wentworth. Margaret Denton sits on this Advisory Committee.

Exclusion of disabled women and lesbians

Dr. Vera Chouinard and graduate student Ali Grant are working on a paper focusing on the "silencing" and "exclusion" of disabled and lesbian women in the work of geographic research. In addition, Dr. Chouinard is presently developing a project to explore the struggles by disabled women against the "ableist" and sexist policies and practises of the government.

Impact of combined work and family responsibilities

Dr. Allison McKinnon is currently conducting a study of the impacts of combined work and family responsibilities on the health of women employed in the Hamilton region. This research is funded by the Women's Health Office of the Faculty of Health Sciences, McMaster University. The study has been designed in co-operation with the Child Care Task Force of the Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth and the Corporation of the City of Hamilton. Approximately 1000 women are being surveyed and focus groups are being formed from this larger sample so women can discuss the health impacts of their paid and unpaid work.

Impact of paid and unpaid work on nurses' well-being

Dr. Vivienne Walters, in collaboration with Dr. Eyles and Dr. French, is conducting a SSHRC-funded study to explore the impact of nurses' paid and unpaid work on their well-being. This study involves almost 2,300 nurses in Ontario. In addition, Dr. Walters is conducting another SSHRC-funded study entitled, "Women and health: lay perspectives and priorities" which involves 356 women in Hamilton identifying their main concerns regarding their health and the ways in which they explain these problems.

COMING SOON

McMaster Research Centre for the Promotion of Women's Health:

WORKING PAPER # 1: A Theoretical and Methodological Framework for Research on Women, Work and Health

***For further information,
please contact the Centre office at
525-9140, ext. 23316/23554
after January 15th, 1994.***

RECENT PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

Aronson, J. (1992). I don't want to be a burden: Needing care and assistance in a context of disempowerment. Canadian Woman Studies. 12(2): 65-73.

Aronson, J. (1992). Women's sense of responsibility for the care of old people: "But who else is going to do it?" Gender and Society. 6(1): 8-29.

Ciliska, D. (1993). Beyond dieting: Body image, weight and food preoccupation. Best Start Project Presentation. Toronto, Ontario: October, 1993.

Ciliska, D. (1993). A descriptive study of public health nurses attached to family doctors' offices. International Conference on Community Health Nursing. Edmonton, Alberta. September 27, 1993.

Denton, M. & Walters, V. (1993). Age differences in women's own perceptions of their health. Paper presented at the Canadian Association of Gerontology Meetings. Montreal, Quebec. October 1993.

Gold, N. & Bogo, M. (March 1993). Social work research in a multicultural society: Challenges and approaches. Journal of Multicultural Social Work 2(4): 7-22.

Gold, N. (Fall 1993). On diversity, Jewish women, and social work. Canadian Social Work Review: Special Issue on Women and Social Work.

Hayward, S. & Ciliska, D. Systematic overviews of the effectiveness of public health nursing interventions. ICES conference on Utilizing Research Findings. Toronto, Ontario. October 1993



WOMEN'S HEALTH: KEY RESEARCH AND HEALTH CARE ISSUES

A National Multidisciplinary Conference

This conference will focus on research about the physical, medical, social, political and environmental aspects of women's illnesses, reproductive health, mental health, paid/unpaid work and, nutrition and fitness, and will consider the ways these issues impact on various communities of women - immigrant and refugee women, racially and culturally diverse women, older women, Aboriginal women, disabled women, poor women and lesbians.

April 21 - 24, 1994

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
WOMEN'S HEALTH OFFICE
FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES
CO-ORDINATOR: Ms. Robin Edwards
PHONE: 525-9140 ext. 22210

If you would like the newsletter sent to you by E-Mail, please send us your E-Mail address.

If you would prefer not to receive the newsletter, or prefer to have only one newsletter for all the members of your office, please notify us at:

***Ph. 525-9140 ext. 23316/23554
Fax: (905) 524-2522***

More publications and presentations

McDaniel, S. & McKinnon, A. (1993). Gender differences in informal support and coping among elders: Findings from Canada's 1985 and 1990 general social surveys. Journal of Women & Aging. 5(2): 79-98.

McKinnon, A. (1993). Women, employment, and elder care: The case of Alberta, Canada. Ph.D. Dissertation.

Walters, V. (1993). Stress, anxiety and depression: Women's accounts of their health problems. Social Science and Medicine. 36(4): 393-402.

Walters, V. (1992). Women's views of their main health problems. Canadian Journal of Public Health. 83(5): 371-374.

Walter, V. (1991). Beyond medical and academic agendas: lay perspectives and priorities. Atlantis. 17(1): 28-35.

McMaster Research Centre for the Promotion of Women's Health: Funding Sources

Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada and
Health and Welfare Canada:
\$500,000 (1993-1998).

McMaster University Arts Research
Board Seed Grant:
\$15,000 (1993-1994)

Educational Centre for Aging and
Health, Graduate- Student research
assistantship funding:
\$5,000 (1993-1994)

UPCOMING

McMaster Research Centre for the Promotion of Women's Health:

Workshop #2:

"Towards indigenous notions of
women's empowerment in India"

Dr. Karen Trollope, M.D.
(M.A. Student in Anthropology)

February 22, 1994

1:30-3:00, KTH Room 705

Workshop #3:

"Gender of physicians and gender of
patients: does it make a difference?"

Dr. Christel Woodward, M.D.
(Clinical Epidemiology & Biostatistics)

March 29, 1994

1:30-3:00, KTH Room 705

International Conference on Quality of Nursing Worklife

Hamilton, Ontario March 23-25, 1994

Contact: Quality of Nursing Worklife
Research Unit (416) 978-1968

Altitudes in Health Promotion Research: Third National Conference on Health Promotion Research

June 16, 17, 18 1994

Calgary Alberta

Call for Papers:

Canadian Woman Studies

Women and Health, Spring 1994

Essays, research reports, stories,
poetry and artwork are invited for
submission. Writings may address
many topics related to women and
health and must be written in
accessible language. For further
information, please contact the Centre
at ext. 23316.